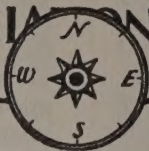


# The COMPASS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS  
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VOLUME XVIII, NUMBER 6

## Delegate Conference Number

SUMMARY OF THE SESSIONS PREPARED  
BY THE CONFERENCE REPORT COMMITTEE

FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Statement Adopted by the Conference

CURRENT PROBLEMS OF GOVERNMENT  
AND SOCIAL WORK

by WILLIAM HODSON

Conference Attendance, Material Supplied to Delegates,  
Special Group Meetings, New AASW Publications



## FROM THE ADDRESS BY LINTON B. SWIFT OPENING THE DELEGATE CONFERENCE

"I should like to call attention to the fact that it was our previous professional development which gave value to the things which we have been doing during the past four or five years. In the Congressional hearings it wasn't our strength as a pressure group which gave any significance to what was done by social workers in Washington. We have no strength as a pressure group. It wasn't the eloquence of those who appeared at Congressional hearings or on other occasions; it wasn't even the personal prestige of any of us. It was rather the extent to which we possessed and gave circulation to facts which we as professional social workers had to a greater degree than did other people. It was also the extent to which our experience made us competent to speak upon the administrative features of the program we were advocating which gave force to what we had to say. . . .

"At this Conference we are considering professional social work factors in the transition from emergency to permanent program. The part that we are going to play in the development and maintenance of a permanent program requires a greater or at least a different sort of professional

competence upon our part. And so we can consider that in this Conference we are getting into our stride for a long pull which requires, first, that we take up, as what you might call unfinished business, the governmental relief program which we have considered in the past and upon which we see so many changes coming in the future; second, that we focus our attention primarily upon professional aspects; third, that we consider the setting in which social work operates, the conditions under which social work is practiced and the way in which those conditions affect the quality and kind of job we can do."

\* \* \*

It can be seen by the following summary report that some of the subjects in the Conference program are more accessible than others for purposes of wide participation and discussion. A number of the basic professional issues to which Mr. Swift referred were presented in panorama and for the first time in a conference of this kind. From the standpoint of Conference planning and Mr. Swift's opening, the following statement is therefore, in a sense, a step in a long-time official record of the professional Association's operation.

## Summary of the 1937 Delegate Conference Sessions

Prepared by Conference Report Committee, and Accepted February 21, 1937

### *Friday Morning February 19, 1937*

By plan of the Conference, Mr. Hodson, the Chairman of the Division on Government and Social Work, presented the recommendations for changes in the Association's statement of fundamental principles. (A revision of these was presented later.) He took up where the Conference left off a year ago on a note of public work for the unemployed, at prevailing wages, divorced from the means test and administered apart from relief; this despite the fact that the Association recognizes "that in the absence of a well planned and actively functioning public works program, WPA became an absolute necessity."

Only a program capable of speed and variety such as has characterized the WPA could have met the need, and even had there been a thoroughgoing program of public works, WPA would still have been necessary.

Miss Kahn's paper (which logically may be discussed before elaborating further upon the

platform in Mr. Hodson's restatement) analyzed some results of the fundamental conception that work is related to maintenance. The public believes that any provision for able-bodied workers which "does not result directly from their own efforts is bound to have a demoralizing effect on the individual and tends to increase the numbers of such persons in any community." But this belief is held despite the demonstrable proposition that "work is the natural expression of the creative impulse in man and not merely the result of the driving pangs of real or prospective hunger." This thesis Miss Kahn proceeded to develop.

We naively believe that WPA will bridge the chasm between unemployment and employment by returning workers to private industry, only to find from a study in one community that the "turnover into private industry from direct relief was eight times that of the turnover from WPA to private employment." It is possible that if maintenance were guaranteed as a right, and if work projects were divorced from maintenance, then people would flock to such projects as youths now go to the CCC.



Both Mr. Hodson and Miss Kahn presented a strong argument for extension of federal assistance on a generalized basis rather than through additional categories to cover those who are ill, incapacitated or otherwise not covered by the present Social Security Act, recognizing full well the arguments put forth by those who would see its extension through categories, as shown in the following quotations from their papers:

"While administrative difficulties can never be permitted to stand in the way of desirable social action, I raise the question whether it is possible to pyramid administrative difficulties to the point where the beneficent purposes of any law or series of laws may be seriously jeopardized."

"People do not live in categories nor behave as categorical people ought to behave."

"We cannot, in my opinion, compensate people for disabilities without placing a premium on those disabilities. There are those who believe that our categorical forms of assistance have put such a high premium on blindness, on widowhood, on old age, that many of us live in impatient hope of achieving that status."

The further statement of the Division as outlined by Mr. Hodson included recommendations for coverage of employes of non-profit agencies in old age benefits, extension of the employment services, a recommendation for a uniform participation by the federal government in all types of assistance and administration on a 50/50 basis, elimination of income groups under \$1000 per year from contribution to old age benefits.

In conclusion Mr. Hodson stated that "while it is true that the employment curves are upward and the relief curves are downward, it is equally true that millions are still unemployed, and millions are still on relief." It is important that the deflation of relief shall not proceed more rapidly than the relief need justifies.

### Friday Afternoon

#### WORK PHILOSOPHY

Recommendation that the Association advocate a government employment program as adequate as possible in extent so as to meet the needs of of the philosophy of work. It was suggested that those who are unemployed brought out discussion work ought to be divorced from maintenance, that work is a privilege not a duty, that to make work selective rather than compulsory would increase the tendency to creative effort and point toward better vocational adjustment. On the other hand, one group pointed to the value of work as occupational therapy and urged that government guarantee to each individual the right to employment and an actual job.

Support was given to the statement that while WPA lacks several desirable characteristics both as to policy and administration, it should be continued at full strength until it is possible to elimi-

nate its relief characteristics. It was thought that selection of personnel should be on basis of ability, and tenure of job should depend upon efficiency with some guarantee of the period of employment. The practise of attempting to fill the WPA quota without relation to work available, especially in the case of young people, was condemned.

Supplementation of wages was discussed. It was asked whether employment in industries providing a sub-standard of wages should be discouraged, by giving full support to some individual as a relief measure and cutting down the number of marginal workers available. In this connection, it was pointed out that wages for work relief cannot be so low as to preclude competition with some types of private employment. Indeed the lowest standard of relief has an element of competition. The fact that people on relief are finding jobs in private employment to a much greater degree than is true of those on WPA seemed to carry implications for further study of policies of both organizations.

The question of whether we know the nature of the whole relief load was brought up. The necessity for adequate statistics as to the people receiving relief was emphasized. Studies similar to that of the Philadelphia County Relief Board as to ability of rejected applicants to support themselves were advocated. Long time planning in preparing people now on relief roles to resume a self-supporting status was illustrated by the Cincinnati study, including (1) training of the young worker, (2) retraining of adults, (3) organization of the casual labor market, and (4) a rehabilitative program for those unable to work.

#### RELIEF BY CATEGORIES—ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Contacts with a group presenting similar social problems give the worker specialized knowledge and skills in meeting these problems with resultant benefit to clients. On the other hand, categorical relief may tend to focus attention on the disability instead of the capacity of the client and result in continuing him in his dependency. Necessary classification of relief recipients should not entail accepting the classification as a unit of treatment without regard to differences in individual situations within the group. Inflexibility of categorical provisions may also result in evasions and misrepresentations by both worker and client so that a client may be accepted for needed care.

A program for universal coverage of basic maintenance needs will be more quickly achieved by presenting the common needs of a given group whose difficulties are obvious to and easily understood by the community. However, provision for all areas of need under categories seems unlikely. The residue at present uncared for under federal and state categorical provisions is depen-



dent on variable and frequently inadequate state and local relief plans, and the situation is made more difficult by the preferential treatment of those accepted in the categories.

Clients have indicated a preference for categorical rather than general assistance. This may be offset by the fact that pressure from certain relief groups has worked to the disadvantage of other less articulate or less appealing categories. (The Pittsburgh Chapter has definitely expressed opposition to the principle of categorical relief as tending to create a hierarchy of relief clients each lobbying for its own interests.)

Administrative costs of separate categorical setups and confusion where members of a single family are receiving relief under different categories were recognized as present but not inherent difficulties. Miss Hoey pointed out that the Social Security Board encourages coordinated, not separate, administrative units. There is an encouraging trend toward effectively integrated programs with workers assigned to districts or neighborhoods, not to categories, particularly in medium-sized and smaller communities.

Precise defining of categories and of relief allowances tends to crystallize provisions at a low level. However, it was suggested that a plan for non-categorical or general relief would run the danger of lowering all relief standards to the destitution level.

Greater flexibility in provisions for categorical relief, removal of too precise limitations and integration of administrative policies and standards were emphasized as of immediate concern to social workers.

It seemed to be the sense of the meeting that coordinated effort should be undertaken by federal, state, and local authorities to fill existing gaps in the present relief programs, and that the Social Security Board should be supported in its advocacy of state public welfare bills including both categorical and general relief.

#### REVISIONS IN SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM

The Board is considering 50% reimbursal to states for administrative costs of relief to blind and aged as well as to dependent children.

There are difficulties in any plans for equalization of state grants because the states themselves do not have accurate data as to the financial resources of the state or of fiscal sub-divisions.

Present attempts to define the status of those eligible for blind pensions are expected to be useful in devising similar methods for gathering factual material for other groups.

Miss Grace Abbott suggested a dual program for providing cash benefits for persons disabled by sickness. The first of these would be coordinated with unemployment compensation schemes to

provide cash benefits to workers temporarily unemployed on account of sickness. Miss Abbott further suggested a program for sickness assistance for workers not covered by unemployment compensation acts, for workers suffering from protracted illness and chronic invalidity. This program would constitute an extension of existing federal and state public assistance programs to cover a new categorical group not now eligible for assistance.

The sense of the meeting by vote was (1) that this proposal be referred to the Committee on Government and Social Work for immediate consideration and study; (2) that the Conference advocates effecting a change in social security provisions so that workers earning \$1000 a year or less would be exempted from contributing to old age insurance; (3) that employees of social agencies should be included in provisions for old age and unemployment insurance.

It seemed to be the further sense of the meeting that (4) the Conference advocates extension of unemployment benefits, to be used in study and vocational training, for youths under 18 who have never been employed.

The Conference also advocated inclusion of domestic servants, casual laborers and other groups (now excluded because of administrative difficulties) in the Social Security Program provisions for unemployment and old age insurance.

Questions on which the sense of the meeting did not clearly appear were:

1. Should subsistence depend upon work?
2. Should full-budget relief be given instead of subsidies to sub-standard wages?
3. Is relief by categories to be preferred to generalized relief?
4. Should the first \$1000 of each worker's annual income be exempted from contributions to old age insurance, and if so, should federal funds make up these contributions?
5. Should assistance provisions of the Social Security Act be liberalized, and if so, how?

## THE COMPASS

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**Saturday**  
**February 20, 1937**

The three papers presented on Saturday discussed the professional development of social work with special reference to administration and social action. Miss Marcus emphasized the need of developing professional competence through the assimilation of facts, hypotheses and skills first borrowed from other disciplines and later integrated into a basis of social practice.

Miss Robinson indicated that although there are specialized administrative skills of management and leadership, the training of administrators should be based upon both education and experience in the primary skills of social work.

Mr. McMillen pointed out that social action should be limited to those fields in which social workers have specific knowledge; and to that number of causes which they have facilities and energy to champion effectively. The methods of social action, according to Mr. McMillen, should be such that they do not prejudice the causes being supported. Wherever possible, the profession should secure the cooperation of other social groups seeking similar ends and should give leadership to such groups. A prerequisite for professional social action is unity among members of the profession itself. Mr. McMillen presented two proposals for developing a greater degree of unity among the profession: more and better education, and more extensive programs of research. He thinks that regular staff members, if properly qualified, might conduct research projects, and that case records should be utilized more extensively for research purposes. He further recommends that social workers occupy key administrative positions so that they may have direct access to all necessary sources of information.

Discussion centered upon (a) action on legislation; (b) membership requirements; and (c) training.

In the conference discussion of professional action, it was indicated that social workers should not feel too hesitant about acting in those fields about which they have knowledge. It was pointed out that a review of the Association's social action during the depression—as illustrated by the efforts to secure federal relief—gives cause for gratification, and should give us courage to undertake other such programs. Certain discussants felt that social workers had sufficient knowledge to justify their taking action on such problems as housing, the lack of medical care, and court actions declaring laws unconstitutional. Other discussants pointed out that while some social workers have rather complete knowledge about some of these fields, the larger body of them are not well enough informed to take intelligent, aggressive action.

Concerning Mr. McMillen's statement that our limited financial resources restrict the field of our effective social action, several persons emphasized the point that in the future we ought to be prepared to pay a higher price to secure desirable ends. This might involve an increase in membership dues. (In this connection, Mr. West pointed out at the meeting of chapter chairmen on Saturday evening that the chapters now have the power individually to increase their dues, which the national Association is then bound to collect.)

In discussing Mr. McMillen's recommendation that we should secure the cooperation of other groups to help us in promoting social action, one speaker emphasized our obligations to ally ourselves with other groups in order to help them in promoting causes of common interest in which they have already taken the initiative.

During the discussion concerning the achievement of professional unity through high educational standards, our present educational requirements for membership were questioned repeatedly. Some delegates wondered whether the only adequate professional discipline was that afforded by the schools of social work, and suggested that some methods should be found to include in the Association persons who through long experience have attained a satisfactory degree of proficiency. To this suggestion other speakers responded that the whole difficulty lies in discovering how to determine a satisfactory degree of proficiency apart from formal professional training. Another objection was raised, namely, that the training now afforded in many of the schools of social work, especially as to field work, is not adequate. Representatives of several schools replied that they were already aware of this deficiency and indicated that they have adopted a program which should shortly remedy this difficulty.

A strong plea was made for the Association to maintain its membership standards in order to help the schools raise the level of their educational programs.

Several speakers emphasized the need for defining our professional competence in terms understandable to and acceptable by civil service commissions, administrators and laymen as well as the Association itself.

No consensus of opinion was registered through votes at the Saturday discussion. Principal questions discussed, but no conclusion reached, seemed to be:

1. On what criteria should professional action rest?
2. What should be the basis of cooperation with other interested groups?
3. Should the membership requirements be revised, and if so, in what direction?



4. Should administrators of social work have had previous training in social work practice?

### **Sunday Morning February 21, 1937**

In addition to the position taken at Friday's meeting that we are in favor of having social service employees included in the provisions of the social security act, a motion was passed that we approve the suggestion that the federal government make provision for granting annuities at cost up to a maximum of \$500 a year to any individual. In the discussion leading to this motion it was brought out that the provision of old age retirement annuities by private social agencies or by state or local units, however generous in themselves, carry one serious limitation—that the individual in moving from one agency to another loses the maximum benefit of these provisions. It was also brought out that we wish to include all employees in social service organizations.

The hope was expressed that certain modifications would be made in restrictions in the act, including abnormally high rates for younger workers.

The Conference then considered the question of establishing methods of rating agencies with respect to employment practices, as medical agencies are rated.

It was felt that evaluations were the key point in personnel problems. This is equally true in private or public agencies, including agencies with the merit system. Whatever standard of practices we adopt can be completely invalidated if we have no standard of evaluation. A motion was passed that the national Division on Employment Practices study methods of individual evaluation and rating scales. It was agreed that this was important in establishing our definition of competence.

The importance of employee participation in evaluation was stressed as well as the need for having employees aware of the contents of the final evaluation.

The motion was passed that the national Division suggest to local chapters the importance of discussing these practices with employers.

The motion was passed that we endorse in principles and accept as minimum standards the report of the Division of Employment Practices.

Some scattered discussion on specific points in the report resulted in the following two motions:

1. That the national Division report next year on the progress made in putting these standards into practice, and
2. That the national Division bring to the attention of national associations concerned

with agency standards the material developed on employment practices for consideration in setting up standards for the approved local agencies.

Questions discussed but not carried through to votes were:

1. Is the Association in favor of setting up definite standards for rating agencies on their personnel practices?
2. How can personnel practices in public agencies be influenced by the AASW?

### **Conference Report Committee**

JOANNA COLCORD, *Chairman*

ANITA FAATZ	RUSSELL KURTZ
MARGARET RICH	WHIT PFEIFFER
MARGARET JOHNSON	RUTH MANN
DONALD HOWARD	ROSE McHUGH

## **THE DELEGATE CONFERENCE PROGRAM**

FRIDAY—FEBRUARY 19

### **Morning Session**

THE ASSOCIATION AND ITS CONFERENCE

Linton B. Swift, President

CURRENT PROBLEMS OF GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL WORK

William Hodson, Chairman, Division on Government and Social Work

PROFESSIONAL FACTORS IN THE SITUATION

Dorothy C. Kahn

### **Afternoon Session**

Discussion of the Association's Program Relating to Relief and Public Welfare

Grace Abbott, Discussion Leader

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20

### **Morning Session**

PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL ACTION

Wayne McMillen

ADMINISTRATION AS A PROFESSIONAL FUNCTION

Virginia Robinson

PRESENT PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS

Grace F. Marcus

### **Afternoon Session**

Discussion of Professional Issues in Social Work Practice, Administration and Social Action

Jeannette Regensberg, Discussion Leader

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21

### **Morning Session**

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH SOCIAL WORK IS PRACTICED

Joseph L. Moss, Discussion Leader

### **Afternoon Session**

SUMMARY OF THE CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS  
Report Committee—

Joanna C. Colcord, Chairman



## Federal Employment and Assistance Programs

Statement Adopted by Delegate Conference, February 21, 1937

*This statement as drafted in tentative form by the Division on Government and Social Work was presented to the Delegate Conference by William Hodson, Chairman of the Division, in his paper on "Current Problems of Government and Social Work," which will be found on pages 9-15 of this issue of THE COMPASS. Some changes in the tentative statement of the proposals were made by the Division at meetings held during the Delegate Conference. The statement as finally revised and officially adopted by the Conference is given below.*

### ADDITIONAL GRANTS-IN-AID NECESSARY

As a necessary foundation structure for public employment or other security programs, the AASW advocates a system of federal grants-in-aid to states for public assistance, to be allocated under conditions to be laid down by the federal government, with actual administration of such funds, together with state funds, left to the states.

By public assistance is meant public provision for those needing aid on a standard necessary to maintain life, health and decency, intelligently administered, and thus distinguished from traditional pauper relief.

This proposal is made not as a substitute for present federal programs but as a necessary addition so that the larger proportion of those in need, to whom the established provisions do not apply, may be afforded at least a minimum part in social security.

The urgent need for such an additional program arises because it is known that large relief operations will be required over a long period; that a large part of the need does not fall under any of the classifications for which federal aid is now available; that the states and local governments are not generally able to conduct adequate programs without the continued aid and participation of the federal government; and because the present plan of dividing responsibilities for the total relief problem between the federal government and the state and local governments leads to confusion of policies and organization, and consequently to failure to realize the full benefits of the provisions which are being made.

### GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Association opposes the curtailment or demobilization of the WPA except as the total need is reduced by the recovery of private in-

dustry. It is the only present provision for the largest part of those in need. Arbitrary reduction of WPA forces workers still in need to depend on state and local relief. State and local relief is the least adequately organized part of relief operation, in some parts of the country is almost non-existent, and is the part of the program for which no share of responsibility is now taken by the federal government.

This Association advocates the gradual transformation of the WPA into a government employment program as adequate as possible in extent so as to meet the needs of those who are unemployed. Such a long time program should be divorced administratively from relief. It should offer genuine employment on projects of material usefulness or cultural value and suited to the capacities of the individual workers. Eligibility for such work should be based on the skill of the worker and not on his need. Payment for work done should be at hourly rates of wages equal to those prevailing for similar work in the locality or to the union scale of wages where such scales have been developed, with a minimum necessary for the maintenance of a decent standard of living for the worker and his dependents. The number of persons to be employed on such a program should be conditioned upon the number of genuine jobs available rather than upon pressure to put a maximum number to work at any given time.

While the Association recognizes that the WPA program lacks several of these desirable characteristics, it advocates continuance of that program at its full strength until it is possible to eliminate its relief characteristics.

### ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Full endorsement is given the assistance provisions of the Social Security Act, by which the federal government makes grants-in-aid to states for assistance for the aged, dependent children and the blind. It is recommended, however, that the grants be on a 50 per cent basis for all categories to avoid preferential status for one group as against another, and further that federal reimbursement be on the basis of total state expenditure without limitation as to the amount of its assistance given to individuals. We approve of a budgetary allowance as the basis of the grants to individuals and urge that federal reimbursement be adjusted as suggested above to avoid the fixing by the states and localities of a maximum grant.

Provision for grants-in-aid to states for general



family assistance should also be on a 50 per cent basis and the present law should be amended to provide for it. Such provision is needed in order to provide assistance to the very large numbers of persons who are able to work but for whom no employment opportunities are available, and for a wide variety of families where disasters due to ill health, accident and other causes for the relief of which no provision is now made under the Federal Social Security Act. We believe that federal participation in this broad area of distress is as essential as in those areas now covered. Such extended provision should include the care of transients and homeless families and persons.

Administration of this extended assistance should be left to the states and localities. The federal government should make its grants on the condition that adequate state organization and standards of work and standards of personnel shall be established and maintained.

The federal government should make a 50 per cent grant to the states for the actual cost of administration of all forms of public assistance in state and local departments in which the personnel is selected on a merit system under standards approved by the Civil Service Commission of the United States. The remaining cost of administration should come from the state and localities. We do not believe that any experience in private business or public administration has disclosed the exact percentage of that expenditure which may properly be used for administrative purposes. The cost of efficient and economical administration must be met if the law is to be successfully carried out. Careful study and review of actual expenditures in various parts of the country and the results achieved will ultimately provide a basis for more intelligent determination of this question. Some such studies are now being jointly carried on by federal agencies and the states.

### EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The Association urges that the Employment Service be strengthened and developed. Not only will it be required to function smoothly in relation to eligibility for unemployment insurance, but the Employment Service should operate for the clearing of opportunities for employment in private industry to those who are on government work and relief programs. The Employment Service is an indispensable and vital link in relation to work opportunities and capacities of those in need.

### PERSONNEL AND MERIT SYSTEMS

The Association believes that the selection of personnel on the merit system in all fields of public welfare by federal, state and local govern-

ments is indispensable to efficient and humane administration. In no other field of governmental operation is the elimination of politics so vital. Vast sums will be spent for the various forms of public assistance and this expenditure must be kept free of corruption and political chicanery. The people in need are entitled to good care and their need must not be exploited for partisan purposes.

This Association will lend its full support to those governmental departments which strive to maintain the merit principle and to make it the sole basis of appointment. We shall oppose every effort or device to circumvent civil service or merit appointments such as a provision that legislative bodies must approve all appointments by public agencies where the salary is more than a specified amount.

The Association urges that the federal government continue to extend its cooperation with the states to secure a strong, qualified and experienced personnel in all public health and welfare programs. Each of the millions of assistance operations locally throughout the nation involves matters of grave and intimate importance to those who are aided. These relationships can only be kept on a sound basis if the states and local governments draw on the experience which has been developed in the giving of relief and assistance. It is recommended that the present restriction in the Social Security Act which limits the authority of federal agencies in relation to personnel in the states be withdrawn.

### REDUCTION OF NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

Reduction of the extent of federal grants to states for general assistance can be anticipated with increased opportunities for employment and continued business recovery. There is practical certainty, however, that there will be a large volume of unemployment and need for relief for an extended period. The American Association of Social Workers, therefore, urges that careful study be given to the possibility of reduction in general assistance in the future by such means as:

1. Extension of unemployment and old age insurance to wage earners not entitled to such benefits under present social security laws.
2. Restraining programs which would reestablish many workers now in obsolete, semi-skilled, or unskilled classifications, and vocational education to be established for young people on the basis of careful study of their needs for such training.
3. Special programs of benefits or assistance in connection with causes of need such as temporary illness of wage earners, and invalidity prior to retirement age.



## STUDY BY COMMISSION

The American Association of Social Workers recommends that a thorough study and evaluation of the relief and assistance problems should be undertaken at this time of transition from emergency to long-time operations. A non-partisan commission is recommended to be appointed by the President, equipped with means for a broad study of current programs and needs; the relation of relief to unemployment and other causes of need; the problems of cost, finance and administration, and of methods of cooperation between the federal and state governments.

## ORGANIZATION OF FEDERAL WELFARE SERVICES

In previous years, the American Association of Social Workers has advocated the formation within the federal government of a department of social welfare in which the several welfare services would be grouped. The report of the President's Committee on Administrative Management is now before Congress containing a recommendation that such a department be established. This

and other sections of the report, particularly in regard to personnel, are of great importance in connection with future development of federal welfare programs. While the Association continues to advocate integration of the several welfare services, the working out in detail of the proposals which have been made brings up equally important questions involving the classifications of services and the maintenance of the integrity and effectiveness of the programs now in operation.

Careful study of the report, and of detailed recommendations as they appear later, is urged on the Association membership.

*Division on Government and Social Work*

WILLIAM HODSON, *Chairman*

HELEN CROSBY, *Secretary*

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ELLEN C. POTTER, M.D.

FRANCES TAUSSIG

MRS. EDITH M. TUFTS

## CURRENT PROBLEMS OF GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL WORK

WILLIAM HODSON

*Chairman, National Division on Government and Social Work*

THE principles which have been set forth in the tentative proposals regarding federal employment and assistance programs, submitted by the Division on Government and Social Work for consideration by the Conference, are fundamentally very much the same as they were in the document which was adopted by the Conference in February of 1936. There have been some changes in emphasis, but in the main those principles remain substantially the same and the arguments in behalf of them are substantially the same. What I would like to do is to restate to some extent the arguments in behalf of the recommendations made and to emphasize here and there points on which it seems to me emphasis may be desirable.

We took the position at our last Conference that there should be established as soon as possible a system of federal grants-in-aid to states for public assistance. Under this plan, funds would be allocated to the states by the federal government under conditions to be laid down by appropriate federal authority, which would establish a national minimum standard of performance as a condition precedent to receiving federal assistance. The actual administration of these funds together with the funds provided by the states and localities

would be left to local authority, the federal government maintaining as much supervision as necessary to determine that the minimum standards and the provisions of the law were being properly carried out. In other words, we advocated that the principles and procedures adopted in the federal social security program with respect to grants-in-aid for dependent persons over 65, for dependent children and for the blind, be extended to that large group of our people who are dependent because they cannot get jobs, and who are being provided for on direct relief financed at the present time wholly by local and state governments.

*Advantages and Difficulties of WPA*

If I understand the position of the Association aright, it has always recognized the clear advantages of the WPA program as an emergency measure. We have always believed in work as against idleness. That is fundamental in our philosophy. We have recognized the speed and efficiency with which the WPA program was put under way in the light of the tremendous difficulties and obstacles which had to be overcome.

I think I state your mind when I say that in the



absence of a well-planned and actively functioning public works program, WPA became an absolute necessity. It probably would have been necessary to some degree in any event, because even a good public works program would not have provided all of the employment required at the height of the depression and thereafter.

At the same time we have recognized the difficulties of the WPA program from a long-range point of view. We know that funds have never been sufficient to put all of the employables to work, so that many persons capable of employment have not actually secured jobs. It has not always been possible to provide a sufficient variety of work to include opportunities for all skills, and many persons have had to do work which they are not suited to do in order to be employed at all. We have recognized the problems which grow out of the fact that the WPA wage is a fixed wage and that it has become necessary as a consequence to supplement that wage in the cases of large families. We know, and I am sure there will be general agreement everywhere, that the highest morale value is achieved when employment is based upon the capacity to do the work offered, rather than upon the destitution of the person seeking the job.

I suspect that the administrators of the federal program regret as much as we do some of the compromises which had to be made by reason of the fact that that program was at one and the same time a work and a relief program.

#### *State and Local Relief Standards*

Now we have observed with consternation what the states—some states—and localities have done, or did do, when the federal government withdrew its financial aid from the states for purposes of direct relief. As you know, standards in some parts of the country fell to indecently low levels, either because certain localities lacked the will to carry on effectively, as effectively as they might have done, or because they lacked the necessary funds to do so. In some places, no doubt, both of these factors played a part, but one cannot review the record without coming to the conclusion that many local governments did not do as much as they might have done had there been a real desire to protect their own people within the limits of the means available to those local communities.

The fact remains that even after the withdrawal of federal aid some states and localities (and I think I may say New York among them) did not lower their standards of relief, but continued to appropriate the funds necessary to maintain levels previously established during the period of federal assistance.

One of the unfortunate aspects of the situation was the unseemly controversies that arose between certain states and their local sub-divisions when the states, upon the withdrawal of federal funds, in turn withdrew state assistance to local governments. There followed a period of unconscionable buck-passing as to the measure of responsibility for relief as between the state on the one hand and the city and the county on the other.

Out of this experience has come to most of us a deepened conviction that federal grants-in-aid for all forms of public assistance constitute an indispensable underpinning, to use the word which has become so familiar in our conferences, for any type of work program which is now in existence or which may later be developed. There is just as much reason for federal assistance to the states to maintain direct relief as there is to provide federal assistance for the old and the young and the blind.

#### *General Assistance Program and Categorical Relief*

There is just as much need for establishing national minimum standards of performance in the administration of direct relief where unemployment is the major factor as there is for such standards in the case of those forms of assistance for which the federal government has already recognized its responsibility under the Social Security Act.

Now it is clear that the categorical forms of relief which are included in the Social Security Act have a popular sanction which unfortunately does not apply as yet to direct relief outside of those categories. The community recognizes the claim for public assistance of dependent old people who are no longer able to work and maintain themselves. There is no fear of so-called demoralization or so-called pauperization in the case of old age assistance, because in most cases these old people have had a lifetime of self-sustaining employment, and it is now accepted public policy to withdraw from the labor market such persons over sixty-five as may now be employed in order to increase the work opportunities for younger people.

In the case of dependent children we have long approved the principle that the proper place for a dependent child is in his own home, rather than an institution, and that public assistance should be provided in the home wherever possible, leaving exceptional cases to institutions where no other plan is possible or desirable.

The handicap under which the blind suffer has been obvious to all and public assistance for this group is established as necessary and desirable. No one contends that a blind person can compete



in the ordinary labor market. He must therefore have special consideration in the way of vocational training and assistance in the way of food, shelter and clothing until he can secure employment for which he has been trained.

When we turn to a consideration of that large body of persons who seek public assistance because they are out of work, rather than because of special handicaps, the public mind is confused and very often intelligent people are misled, as this group well appreciates, by some experience which they have not interpreted properly or which is entirely exceptional and not typical of the general situation. I suppose no lament arising out of depression conditions has been louder than the one which begins, "It is utterly impossible for me to secure a maid. They are all on relief." The proper response to this statement ought always to be, "What wages did you offer and what conditions of employment?"

People generally have regarded direct relief as transitory in nature, something to be dispensed with before too long. While they have recognized that unemployment must be relieved, they have confused the evils of relief-taking with the evils of being out of a job, and, as has been pointed out so many times before in our conferences, it is not the act of taking relief which is to be condemned, but rather the fact that men could not, with the best will in the world, earn their daily bread by the proverbial sweat of their brow.

Generally speaking, then, there is not the same sympathetic acceptance of direct relief that we have in the case of old age and other categorical forms. Because of greater public sympathy the standards which have been established for categorical relief have been on the whole higher than those for direct relief.

Now, as I have pointed out, the Association has favored a general public assistance program with federal grants-in-aid for general public assistance in addition to the categories now established by the Social Security Act. Some members of the Division on Government and Social Work have questioned this position partly on principle and partly as a matter of strategy. On the one hand, it has been argued that since standards of relief in the categories have been higher, by adding more categories you will extend the higher standard to the new categories, leaving a relatively small residue which can be handled on a non-categorical basis. The argument is, in brief, that this would mean more adequate and more satisfactory assistance than could be secured on a generalized plan. It is contended, further, that there is relatively little chance in the immediate future of securing passage of federal legislation which would authorize grants-in-aid for general public assistance,

but there is likelihood of securing new categories, such, for example, as special forms of relief for the chronically ill who have been long incapacitated.

#### *Administrative Difficulties of Categorical Relief*

While administrative difficulties can never be permitted to stand in the way of desirable social action, I raise the question whether it is possible to pyramid administrative difficulties to the point where the beneficent purposes of any law or series of laws may be seriously jeopardized.

Those of us who have struggled with the present complications arising out of different local provisions and different standards in the case of aid to mothers with dependent children, to the aged, to the blind, to the veterans, are acutely conscious of the misunderstandings which arise in the public mind because of these differing standards. A budget for a mother with dependent children differs from a budget for an old person or for a family on direct relief. These differences grow out of the law itself or out of the practice and tradition which have surrounded the administration of the law for many years.

The maintenance of separate categories and the addition of other categories involves, in addition to possible public misunderstanding, administrative confusion and higher administrative costs. In this connection, consider the maze of special bookkeeping and accounting which is required by reason of the different legal requirements already set up for the existing categories.

I personally do not share the conviction that it is impossible within a reasonable time to secure federal assistance for direct relief. Once the federal government accepts the responsibility for sharing the costs of direct relief and establishing minimum standards for its administration, we can look forward, as we did in the FERA period, to a steady improvement in relief administration.

In the long run, what we desire to do is to provide assistance to people who need it, in accordance with their need. We can deal more flexibly and on the whole more effectively with the varieties of human need by giving broad authority to the relief administrators, rather than by putting them in a series of strait-jackets, which they must inevitably struggle to break through for the simple reason that people do not live in categories nor behave as categorical people ought to behave. The same family might be entitled to receive several different kinds of categorical relief. There may be a dependent child, a veteran, an aged person over 65, all living in the same household. It seems to me very difficult to deal with a family under half a dozen different laws and



with as many standards of relief, which vary both in terms of the federal law, in terms of the state law and in terms of the local law.

It is true that much can be done by wise administration to minimize the difficulties of categorical relief, but the cost of this effort is far in excess of the price that ought to be paid or that would have to be paid under a general relief program. It is, of course, clear that the categories which are now established will be with us for many years to come. I recognize and accept that fact, but I doubt the wisdom of establishing further categories unless it shall appear within a reasonable time that there is no other way of securing federal assistance for persons in need outside of the existing categories. Whether as a matter of strategy it will ultimately prove desirable to proceed further on a categorical basis would depend in my opinion upon whether there are many new categories required or whether there is actually one more category which would include a very large percentage of those now on direct relief. A further analysis of the characteristics of our relief population may establish that such is the fact.

#### *Governmental Employment Program Divorced from Relief*

In the outline for a federal assistance program adopted by the conference a year ago, we advocated a governmental employment program which would be divorced so far as possible from the needs test and from relief administration. It was our conviction then that men should be hired on the basis of their ability to do the work required and that the prevailing rates of wages should be paid for this work.

We urged, in addition, the strengthening of the public employment services on a broad scale throughout the country. During the year, the Association has taken a very definite position in opposition to the curtailment of the WPA program, except as persons on the rolls are employed by private industry. I believe that our conviction in this matter is shared by the high administrative officials of the government. Arbitrary reduction of the WPA forces would simply mean, as you all know too well, the throwing back upon the state and local relief authorities of a heavy burden, which they do not have the funds to sustain and for which they now receive no federal reimbursement. However, as rapidly as WPA can be liquidated through increased employment in private industry, the Association looks forward to a real governmental employment program which can be expanded in hard times and contracted as the need for it subsides. The President gave the country a suggestion of the way in which his mind is working on this question when he

proposed on the 9th of February a \$500,000,000 appropriation annually for all types of public works. The President obviously had under consideration more than the problem of the drought area, important as that problem is. He was apparently viewing the situation on a national basis, because he spoke of establishing regional boards throughout the country which would include federal and state officials, and which would submit annually a list of proposed public works that were needed and which could be effectively put under way. A national planning agency would determine which of these projects should be approved and when it should be put into operation.

In my opinion, such a program would open the way for a transition from WPA employment which is both work and relief, to employment which is regarded solely as work, and with conditions and employment compensation therefore which are in all respects similar to those provided in private employment generally. Whether such a program will provide a sufficient variety of jobs, including the white-collar and professional groups, and whether all of the jobs provided can be made available in the areas of greatest need at the time of greatest need, are questions which experience alone will answer. The fact remains that we have talked of public works as a partial remedy for unemployment for many years, but we have never actually tried it. The ultimate solution need not rest on public works alone. It may be desirable for the government to provide direct employment as it has done in the case of WPA, in order to supplement job opportunities for those categories of workers not adequately provided for in the public works program.

Apart from the character and extent of the federal works program, in my opinion it is desirable to give states and localities the authority to administer work relief as a relief measure and as a partial alternative to direct relief. I believe that if legislation can be passed whereby the federal government will provide grants-in-aid for direct relief, it should also reimburse on expenditures for work relief in those localities which choose to use that method as a temporary expedient in periods of depression.

#### *The Provisions of the Social Security Act*

The program adopted by the Conference a year ago does not refer specifically to the Social Security Act, which was then in the early stages of its organization. The Division on Government and Social Work wishes at this time to record officially in behalf of all of the social workers its endorsement of the public assistance provisions of that Act. In the judgment of the Division, all of the



grants provided under the various categories should be on a fifty per cent federal reimbursement basis in order to insure uniform treatment for all groups of beneficiaries.

As I have already pointed out, the Division would like to see the extension of the provisions now made for the special categories included in the present law to those who are in need of direct relief, but who do not come within any of the established categories.

When we come to a consideration of the insurance provisions of the Social Security Act as distinguished from its public assistance phases, the Division, of necessity, must move with greater caution. By and large the experience of social workers has been in the area of relief and assistance. It is in this area that the organized social work group speaks with the broadest knowledge and competence. While there are many social workers who are social scientists in a broader sense and are therefore qualified as individuals to speak authoritatively with regard to the social insurances, this is probably not true of the profession as a whole. Nevertheless, we are conscious of the close inter-relationship between the public assistance and the insurance provisions of the Social Security Act and the constant relation and interaction between the two, and there is certainly an obligation resting upon all of us to familiarize ourselves as fully as possible with the special insurances as we have never done before.

The Division would like to see the coverage of the Social Security Act extended as broadly as it is possible and practicable to do. It is our belief that the present exemption of non-profit agencies and their employees is not justified by any reasons of justice or practicability. We hold that social welfare agencies, for example, should be taxed as other employers are taxed, and that social workers should pay their share toward old age benefits just as other employees are required to do. The benefit and obligation should apply to social work employers and social work employees without distinction.

We are also of the opinion that the employees of state and local governments should not be excluded from the Act, provided a practicable and constitutional method can be found of including them. We should like to see a determination of this issue as soon as possible.

One further recommendation was adopted by the Division, namely, that old age benefits should be non-contributory on incomes of less than a thousand dollars a year. In other words, no employee earning less than a thousand dollars yearly would be expected to pay any tax toward his old age benefits on the principle that he will need

all of his earnings to maintain a minimum standard of living.

#### *The Merit Principle in Administration of Public Assistance Programs*

So much has been said about the necessity for qualified and experienced personnel in every aspect of the public assistance program that little more needs to be added at this time except by way of emphasis. We know perfectly well that a good law badly administered is a failure, whereas a bad law well administered can be made to work. In the last analysis the whole public assistance program is a personal service program. The test of its efficiency as well as its beneficence comes at the point where a public employee deals directly with the person in need. If, at this point, there is courtesy, intelligence and understanding, the benefits of the law will come to those for whom they are intended.

The investigators who climb the tenement stairs will give their best work if they are under adequate supervision by persons whose training and experience qualify them to supervise public assistance work. A staff chosen on a political basis or upon any basis other than training, experience and fitness for the job, will in the long run discredit public welfare work in this country. Public assistance might then become a political pork barrel of menacing proportions, and then in very truth we would be playing politics with misery.

We should like to see the present provisions of the Social Security Act amended so that the Social Security Board might establish minimum standards for the selection of personnel on a merit basis. We strongly urge upon every state and local government the necessity as well as the desirability of establishing the merit principle, so that experienced personnel may be chosen without regard to any considerations save those of ability to do the work which is required to be done.

When it is remembered that the worker from the public welfare office may actually control the very destiny of the families he serves, it becomes clear why intelligence and experience count so heavily in this phase of public governmental work. We must accept and discount in advance the political attacks which will be made upon so-called overhead in public administration. We desire to see that all public work is administered as efficiently and as economically as possible, but we deny that there has been established any fixed percentage by which we can determine the legitimate administrative costs in public welfare work.

We shall have to watch these administrative costs in various parts of the country, compare the results achieved under similar circumstances in our field (incidentally, I know of no percentages that



have ever been established for the overhead of business and industry), and accordingly arrive at a fair figure for administration based upon our developing experience in the light of varying conditions throughout the country. There can be no question but that proper administration of the social security legislation is absolutely indispensable and proper administration can only be had by employing personnel adequate in number and in qualifications for the task.

#### *The Remaining Relief Load*

As we look forward to the coming year, it is important to bear in mind that whereas our program in February of 1936 was adopted while the effects of recovery were not substantially evident in terms of the reduction of the relief rolls, we are now in a period of declining relief loads in the country as a whole. It is obvious that some local communities have indulged in wishful thinking and are of the opinion that the relief rolls will be rapidly deflated and soon eliminated. While it is true that the employment curves are upward and the relief curves downward, it is equally true that millions are still unemployed and millions are still on relief. We believe that there can be no sudden deflation of relief, but hopefully the relief load will decrease steadily as employment opportunities increase.

In the end we shall have a relief load much larger than any we have known in the past. It will include those who are unemployable, but who did not receive public assistance prior to the depression; it will also include persons who are temporarily out of work and those who are receiving sub-standard wages; it will include the sick and the mentally unadjusted. We know also that progress in machine production will mean a larger number of persons than ever before who will not be employed again.

It is important that the deflation of relief shall not proceed more rapidly than the reduction in the relief need justifies. The statistics already compiled by the Association have shown what has happened in such states as New Jersey and Pennsylvania, where arbitrary cutting of relief resulted in widespread hardship and suffering. All possible facilities at our command should be developed for interpreting the actual facts concerning needs and programs, so that the public may understand and be prepared to finance and support whatever may be necessary in order to meet the minimum requirements of human beings in distress.

The Division, recognizing the importance of keeping abreast of the actual situation in various parts of the country, has a Committee on Statistics and Research, so that we may compile information which can be digested and used by the Division

and the Association for public education. The Division is of the opinion that much can be done through retraining programs which would enable workers who have heretofore labored in areas of work which have now become obsolete, to re-establish themselves in kinds of employment for which there is current demand. We believe also that vocational education for young people which is based upon a careful study of their needs and of job opportunities will be of real use and benefit.

#### *Modern State Welfare Laws*

Implicit in all that has been said is the fundamental proposition that the so-called poor laws and the so-called poor law administration, as we have known them in this country during the last half century, must be completely and irrevocably abolished. These laws have been dominated by a spirit of suspicion and hatred toward persons who were in need of public assistance. Certainly after the experience of the last six years no reasonable person will say that we can continue to administer relief on the principle that good public policy requires us to make it so hard for our clients to get relief that few people will ask for the help to which they are entitled. We recognize now that there is no stigma in asking for help when people are unable to provide for themselves through circumstances beyond their control. It is essential that the old poor laws be repealed and that they be replaced by modern provisions for public assistance and public welfare, and that these new laws be administered by persons who have some comprehension of what the law is intended to do and of how human beings in distress should be treated. This is not a task, as someone recently said, for a part-time Justice of the Peace, nor for someone who but for his job as a poor law official would be on relief himself.

During the period of the administration of the FERA there was marked improvement throughout the country in the standards of relief-giving and the qualifications of the relief-givers. Since federal grants-in-aid for direct relief have ceased, these standards have noticeably declined. We believe that a restoration of federal grants-in-aid would greatly improve relief administration throughout the country, and would tend to minimize and ultimately abolish poor laws and poor law administration.

While this is so, it is also true that the administration of direct relief is and has been for some time a responsibility of the locality and the state. There is much that can be done by the localities and the states throughout the country to improve their laws and their administration even without federal assistance. Unless the local communities are aroused to the necessity for the



modernizing and humanizing of public assistance administration, no amount of federal assistance will change the situation fundamentally in the long run. It is the duty of social workers and public officials everywhere to take those steps which are now possible to improve the laws governing public assistance and the administration of these laws. Federal grants-in-aid will help enormously, but in the meantime it is up to the states and the localities to put their own houses in order to the extent that they can do so. They can revise their laws and make their administration intelligent. It is our business to promote these reforms as rapidly as they can be effected, and the excuse that we do not have federal grants-in-aid is not a justification for our failure to do what is now possible.

For a long time social workers have favored the segregation of welfare activities on a federal level into a separate department of social welfare or public welfare, although there has been no meeting of minds on the details incident to the creation of such a department. We have not reached final conclusions on such questions as the possible rearrangement of functions in various federal departments, nor has there been any attempt at a statement of the precise duties which ought to be assumed by the new department of social welfare if one is created.

#### *Administrative Reorganization of the Federal Government*

Recently the committee appointed by the President on administrative management has made its report, which is based upon an elaborate and detailed study of problems of personnel management, fiscal management, planning management and administrative reorganization of the government of the United States. However opinions may differ as to the recommendations made in this report, all will agree that it is a stimulating document of statesmanlike proportions and one which is filled with practical suggestions on reorganization which deserve extended study and consideration by Congress and the country. This report recommends the creation of a department of social welfare which would administer federal health, educational and social activities, including the social security program, and the administration of charitable and correctional institutions, as well as probation and parole. I think you have a summary of it before you.

No specific recommendation is made by the government's committee with regard to a detailed set-up of such a department, but the committee recommends that power be given by Congress to the President to work out the assignment of agencies and bureaus within the general recommendations laid down in the report. Obviously,

this report is a matter of the highest importance to all social workers. It should be one of the primary tasks of the Division on Government and Social Work to consider this report and to arrive at some conclusions with regard to it which can be presented, if desired, to the Association for consideration or adoption. The Division is not prepared at this time to make such recommendations in this area. However, there would seem to be little difference of opinion concerning the desirability of a centralized and coordinated administrative operation in the field of public welfare and public assistance. With this major aspect of the recommendation of the President's committee most of us will probably find ourselves in agreement. The details call for further study.

#### *Need for a Federal Commission to Study Unemployment and Relief*

Now may I conclude this overlong statement with one other comment, with respect to a recommendation made by the Division on Government and Social Work? It has always been recognized as one of the essential procedures in a democracy to permit a legislative body to investigate, at such time and place and manner as it chose, any activity of any administrative body. No one will question the necessity and desirability on the whole of this power which is essential to a proper functioning of democratic government. Our problem, particularly in the area of public assistance, about which so little is really known by the general public, has not been with the exercise of the power to investigate, but in the manner in which that power has been exercised, because in many instances it has been exercised primarily from a political motive and with a political purpose in mind. The chief interest has been a desire to get the headlines which would tend to establish the preconceived ideas of the investigators, rather than to deal with the problem on a constructive basis. That is the difficulty that we face in connection with the exercise of the power of investigation by legislative bodies in this country. Since they will always have this power we need to devise ways and means of persuading our legislative bodies to exercise that power in a constructive manner, which will actually result in real benefit to the community.

The English have a much better method. They have what we all are familiar with as "Royal Commissions." At so many points in English history where great problems had to be studied and recommendations made for improvement, a Royal Commission has studied the question for a year or two years or more and has presented documents by way of reports which have become classics in the literature of the subject which the report



covered.

Is it too much to hope, in view of the importance and complexity of the whole problem of relief and unemployment, that we may at some measurable time in the future, adopt the precedent of the English in this respect, the precedent of the Royal Commission, and attempt really to study the whole situation on a considered and a nationwide basis, not with the primary purpose of trying to fix blame, nor of criticizing for the sake of criticism, but for the purpose of analyzing the problems presented, and with the objective of providing for the country some light and leading in what has become the major problem of our generation?

### *One Aspect of Conference Preparation*

The material described below represents an important part of the preparation for the Delegate Conference by national committees and the national staff which drafted or assembled these documents pertaining to the subjects under discussion at the Conference. Each member of the Conference received a red folder containing a complete set of this material.

#### *1. Historical Development of the Delegate Conference.*

A reprint of the article which appeared in the February, 1937, *Compass*.

#### *2. Tentative Proposals Regarding Federal Governmental Employment and Assistance Programs*

This statement, which was prepared by the Division on Government and Social Work for consideration by the Delegate Conference, was revised by the Division during the Conference. The report as revised was adopted by the Conference at the final session and is printed in this issue of *The Compass*.

#### *3. A Suggestion for Compensation for Unemployment Due to Sickness*

This material was submitted by Grace Abbott for consideration by the Division on Government and Social Work. The Delegate Conference voted to request the Division to give immediate consideration and study to this subject.

#### *4. Summary of Recent Statistics of Relief in the United States*

Of original and permanent value is this 36-page document prepared for the Association's Conference by Thomas B. Rhodes. Mr. Rhodes is secretary of the Advisory Committee on the Collection of General Relief Statistics, sponsored jointly by the WPA and Social Security Board.

This pamphlet describes the statistical projects on the subject of relief operations of the Works Progress Administration, Social Security Board, Resettlement Administration, Surplus Commodities, and the state and local governments.

The last section "suggests the obstacles to be encountered in obtaining a complete picture of present relief activities," but attempts summaries of comparable data from the several administrations. There are four charts, 21 tables, and a list of the publications of the several federal agencies dealing with statistics of current relief programs.

This pamphlet is marked "not for publication" as some of the material was released by the government agencies especially for the AASW Conference. (A limited supply is available at the national office at 25 cents a copy.)

#### *5. Federal Grants to the States for Maternal and Child Welfare Services, Social Security Act, Title V, Parts 1, 2, and 3, Administered by the Children's Bureau*

Memorandum prepared for the Delegate Conference by the Federal Children's Bureau showing the extent to which these programs are now in operation and the kinds of service which have been stimulated or developed as a result of them.

#### *6. Social Security Services for Mothers and Children, Administered by the Children's Bureau*

A pamphlet containing a series of reprints from *The Child*, published by the Children's Bureau, giving more detailed information regarding the operation of these services. (Copies may be secured from the Children's Bureau.)

#### *7. A Survey of the Current Relief Situation in Twenty-eight Selected Areas of the United States*

Prepared by the AASW for the Delegate Conference from published reports of relief administrations, special studies by non-governmental bodies and reports from correspondents of the Association. The survey is not statistical, but gives a picture of what is happening around the country in the way of inadequate relief for employables, as well as unemployables, low relief standards, stoppages of relief, stringent intake policies, elimination of transient relief and rent relief, staff reductions, wage supplementation (both WPA and private employment), etc. (Copies available from national office at 25 cents each.)

#### *8. How Self-Supporting Are the Ineligibles? A Study of 502 Rejected Applicants for Relief, Philadelphia County Relief Board*

This study was made by Saya Schwartz, a member of the Philadelphia Chapter. The items examined and the figures arrived at provide some of the data which have been lacking because of a



gap between on the one hand, our interest in providing for recognized relief needs, and on the other hand, our interest in gauging recovery. The figures indicate for instance, that those who have applied and have not met the eligibility criteria for relief include a very large number of families who are not sharing in recovery, but who are on the contrary living on standards so close to relief standards that they are the potential relief case load. This suggests that if we had access to information about the families who do not apply for relief because they recognize that they would not be eligible, we might then have an appalling figure on the potential relief case load. These estimates deal with the question of the exhaustion of personal resources in money and in morale. They suggest what data would be required in order to know how to forestall destitution. (Copies may be made available.)

9. *A Digest of the Principal Recommendations of the President's Committee on Administrative Management*

This material, which was prepared by the Committee on Information Service of the Division on Government and Social Work, was sent as a Discussion Bulletin to all of the chapters for their use in studying the proposals for a Department of Social Welfare and for extension of the merit system in the federal service.

10. *Interpretation*

A booklet containing reproductions of clippings from newspapers and periodicals illustrating the use which has been made of material sent out from the national office as one part of its effort to interpret to a broader public the information and knowledge which develops out of social work practice.

11. *The Question of Professional Social and Other Action*

A reprint of the article which appeared in the February, 1937, *Compass* under the title "The Association's Relationship with Other Agencies." (Copies available from national office.)

12. *Facts About Personnel Standards*

This printed folder of 19 pages cites some expository and statistical facts which can be utilized to show that the case for professional education is borne out in such things as the membership experience of the AASW, a recent court decision on the question of pre-requisites for examination for social work positions, analysis of conditions attending certain appointments under a merit system, etc. The pamphlet also brings together a number of formulations resulting from AASW chapter work on specifications in public welfare (reprinted from various issues of *The Compass*). (Copies available from national office at 20 cents each.)

13. *A Statement of Standards of Employment Practices for Social Workers*

A reprint of the statement prepared by the national Division on Employment Practices which appeared in the January, 1937, *Compass*. This statement was used as the basis for discussion at the Sunday morning session of the Conference. (Copies available from national office.)

*Conference Papers on the Press*

The three papers which were delivered on Saturday morning by Wayne McMillen, Virginia Robinson, and Grace Marcus, together with the paper delivered Friday morning by Dorothy Kahn, will be available this month in a paper-bound volume at a cost of fifty cents. These four papers represent individual contributions to several aspects of professional social work literature. They are formulations which should command the attention of professional social workers for some time to come. They have the quality that is required for purposes of professional self-examination. They both develop hypotheses which have been long advocated by social workers and set forth new concepts and working hypotheses based upon responsible examination of problems which are before all social workers. In the main the papers were designed to open up professional questions which require long-time study and application.

The half day devoted to open discussion, under the leadership of Jeannette Regensburg, on the three Saturday papers, bears witness to the fact that in addition to initial presentation, these papers should be read and their themes tested and furthered in the light of social work where it is practiced.

*Meeting of Chapter Chairmen*

The one formally scheduled evening meeting held during the Delegate Conference was the Committee on Chapter Organization and Program meeting with chapter chairmen.

Sixty-three chapter chairmen met to consider points raised by the Committee in connection with the problem of further opening up the channels for working on national issues which are, in final analysis, fought on local fronts. Discussion indicated that underlying many of the practical difficulties of chapter financing, chapter jurisdiction, etc., there are the questions about professional functions which are answered only by what is understood and what in fact is done. Uneven as the issues, resources, and tempo of chapters obviously are, few points could be resolved in brief discussion. Direct expression from the chapters to the Committee, however, should add to the Committee's understanding of problems to be worked on.



In adjourning the meeting, Mrs. Florence Booth, acting in Mrs. Everett Castle's place as chairman of the Committee, urged that chapter chairmen address their further suggestions and questions about the agenda of this meeting, to the national office.

### *Conference Meetings by Special Arrangement*

#### *Employment Practices*

A luncheon meeting on Sunday under the chairmanship of Rachel Gross, chairman, national Division on Employment Practices, was called by special request. Forty persons attended, representing some 21 chapters. Less than half of these persons were members of chapter committees on employment practices.

Following, as this meeting did, the Sunday morning discussion under the leadership of Joseph Moss, on the proposed AASW Statement of Standard of Employment Practices for Social Work (published in the *January Compass*), in which session the statement was approved as a whole, it was natural that the luncheon discussion centered upon questions about the application of the principles of the statement. This discussion confirmed reports and correspondence in the national office, which show that local chapter activities on the problems of employment practices have prepared the Association to take action on a national statement of professional position as to the scope and character of fundamental principles in social work employer-employee relationships. The questions raised show that experience is required in the matter of local application on the principles; that work on particular problems involved should be built upon the general principles, and that the influence of having a national base which can be quoted and adapted is a ferment rather than a dictum.

#### *Civil Service*

Under the chairmanship of Edith Shatto King, a small group of those especially interested in problems of civil service administration met after one of the Delegate Conference sessions. Special interest centered in Elizabeth Cosgrove's description of the operation of the federal civil service system in relation to social work positions. Elizabeth Cosgrove is the social worker recently appointed to the staff of the federal Civil Service Commission. The fact that staff members of the Commission function directly in the matter of setting up specifications for positions about which they have special knowledge was a source of surprise to AASW members who have met with local prejudice on this and the implied question of self-interest.

### *Delegate Conference Attendance*

Chapters represented . . . . .	59
(including 5 State Councils)	
Delegates . . . . .	110
Alternates . . . . .	69
National committee members	22
Observers (chapters, national associations and governmental agencies) . . . . .	98
Total attendance . . . . .	299

### *Meetings Under Other Auspices*

Two open evening meetings were held for interested Conference members, but not under Conference auspices. One meeting, under the chairmanship of Grace Abbott, considered questions before the country on revision of the national constitution. Another open meeting, arranged by some of the delegates from the New York City Chapter, at which Peter Kasius presided, discussed the social issues in the present situation in Spain.

### *Resolution to Reconsider AASW Membership Requirements Defeated*

A resolution proposing consideration of changes in AASW membership requirements, submitted by Thomas Devine of Grand Rapids, was discussed and voted down at the final session of the Conference. The wording of the proposal, as rejected, was as follows:

It is desirable for the Executive Committee and the membership to consider a more accurate conception of the field of social work than that implied in the present membership requirements of the AASW. In arriving at this conception attention should be given to the fields of group work, social administration, community organization and other activities. If a more accurate and more generally acceptable conception is developed, the membership requirements could then be modified to make possible admission of those whose training and experience justify professional recognition in any line of activity which is accepted as part of the profession. The manner of defining academic and field work requirements for professional status would have to be determined in each branch of the whole field of social work after reaching an agreement concerning the extent of the field. In this consideration the entire membership of the country should participate through chapter discussions as the problems and viewpoints of many small chapters vary from those of chapters in large metropolitan centers.



## A New Book on Unemployment

The first few copies of Doroth C. Kahn's book, "Unemployment and Its Treatment in the United States," were delivered by the printer to the Mayflower Hotel during the first session of the Delegate Conference. Delegates were quick to claim the limited number of copies available and to pronounce the volume a valuable addition to the Association book list.

Since the Conference, printing of the edition has been completed and arrangements for handling and mailing perfected. Orders received in the national office can now be filled and delivery guaranteed within ten days.

Tables and charts, revised to bring them up to date, as of February, 1937, included in the book will lend themselves to a variety of uses and will not be found in any other one volume. Students, teachers and legislators will find this volume a source of valuable information on the subject of unemployment and relief.

As a delegate to the 1936 International Conference of Social Work, Miss Kahn was called upon to report from the United States to the Conference Commission V on Unemployment. The material collected for this report has been used by Miss Kahn as the basis of this new book.

## Resolution in Congress Calls for National Unemployment and Relief Commission

A joint resolution providing for the appointment of a National Unemployment and Relief Commission has been introduced into Congress by Senator James E. Murray, of Montana, and Senator Carl A. Hatch, of New Mexico. This proposal follows the general plan which the Association and its Division on Government and Social Work have been advocating for some time. The resolution states the need for a thorough-going study of all phases of the unemployment relief problems including, "(1) the extent and nature of unemployment and relief needs, (2) the problem of work as against direct relief, (3) the question of assessing the financial burden and administrative responsibilities as between private charitable organizations and local, state, and federal governments, (4) some plan for coordinating the long-term relief program with existing governmental agencies, such as the United States Employment Service, the Social Security Board, the Public Works Administration and other federal agencies, and (5) the probable avenues of greater private re-employment and a general program looking to the liquidation of the entire relief problem."

It is proposed that from five to fifteen "well

qualified and distinguished citizens" shall be appointed by the President, with authority to employ the necessary staff to hold hearings in various parts of the country if necessary, etc. The provision for \$50,000 for expenses of the commission is proposed.

The resolution has been referred to the Senate Committee on Education and Labor. Senator Hugo L. Black has just succeeded to the chairmanship of this Committee.

## AASW Financial Statement and Budget

In the following columns are shown the financial facts about the Association's program. In the first column are the totals of income and expenditure for the year 1936. In the second column are shown corresponding estimates for 1937, constituting the budget for the year adopted by the Executive Committee. The third column is the budget for 1936 for comparison with that of the current year.

The 1936 books and accounts of the Association have been audited by Haskins & Sells, Certified Public Accountants, and the figures shown in the first column below are adapted from the report of the examination made by that firm. The report is on file in the Association office.

	Actual Totals 1936	1937 Budget	1936 Budget
<b>INCOME</b>			
Dues	\$58,674.29	\$60,000.00	\$53,500.00
Publications	2,199.79	3,300.00	2,000.00
Directory	4,509.10	—	5,250.00
Extended Program	2,115.43	—	4,950.00
Miscellaneous	168.03	150.00	300.00
Total Operating Income	\$67,666.64	\$63,450.00	\$66,000.00
Balance January 1	5,429.51	8,490.80	5,429.51
Rental Grant	2,982.50	2,982.50	2,982.50
Chapter Dues	15,428.10	16,000.00	13,000.00
Extended Program—			
Chapter share	237.35	—	—
Loans to Chapters	300.00	—	230.24
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$92,044.10</b>	<b>\$90,923.30</b>	<b>\$87,642.25</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>			
Salaries	\$36,787.38	\$40,420.00	\$39,500.00
Office Expense	9,700.26	10,200.00	10,200.00
Staff Travel	3,143.81	3,500.00	3,200.00
Committee Travel	2,827.50	3,500.00	4,300.00
Compass	4,531.11	5,500.00	4,500.00
Conference	1,911.69	2,000.00	1,950.00
Publications	1,941.76	800.00	1,500.00
Directory	3,686.84	—	3,400.00
Elections	275.00	—	400.00
Job Analysis	—	—	350.00
Total Operating Expense	\$64,805.35	\$65,920.00	\$69,300.00
Rental Grant	2,982.50	2,982.50	2,982.50
Chapter Dues	15,428.10	16,000.00	13,000.00
Extended Program—			
Chapter share	237.35	—	—
Loans to Chapters	100.00	—	—
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$83,553.30</b>	<b>\$84,902.50</b>	<b>\$85,282.50</b>
Estimated Gross Balance	8,490.80	6,020.80	2,359.75
Reserve for Cash Revolving Fund	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
<b>NET ESTIMATED BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ 5,990.80</b>	<b>\$ 3,520.80</b>	<b>*\$ 140.25</b>

\* Deficit.



Miss Edna Zimmerman  
1916 South Fourth St.  
Springfield, Ill.

20)

THE COMPASS

March, 1937

## ANNOUNCING THE PUBLICATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND ITS TREATMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

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